



Community Transition Funding Approved For Pinellas STAR Center

Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham recently approved a \$2.1 million grant to the Pinellas Plant Community for use to help alleviate the adverse impacts of closing the Pinellas Plant in Largo, Florida.

The community assistance grant will be used to make improvements to the Pinellas Science Technology and Research (STAR) Center. The funds will be used for safety code compliance upgrades including fire safety enhancement, utility sub-metering, boiler replacement, and other utility retrofits. These upgrades are essential in order to bring the STAR Center into compliance with requirements for legally leaseable space. In addition, the grant will enable the community to improve safety for the existing tenants of the STAR Center and improve the marketability of the remaining rental space.

The Energy Department's weapons production mission at the Pinellas Plant ended in September 1994, after 40 years. At its peak, the Pinellas Plant employed over 2,000 contractor employees and made a direct financial impact of about \$200 million annually on the region. Shutdown of production, transfer of capability and cleanup and final turn over of the Pinellas Plant to the community was completed in December 1997.

The community has been very successful in securing tenants for the STAR Center. The rental space will be 96 percent occupied with 24 tenants collectively employing 1,730 workers. The STAR Center is exceeding the original employment of the Pinellas Plant prior to the announcement of closure. The community has successfully recruited tenants requiring high technical skills in order to provide employment opportunities for dislocated workers.

Media Contact: Jacqueline Johnson, 202/586-5806
Joe Davis, 202/586-4940

Release No. R-01-041
Release Date: March 19, 2001